

MITRA AND MITRA THE IDEA OF "FRIENDSHIP" IN ANCIENT INDIA

One of the serious difficulties with which those who study the character of the ancient Indian god Mitra are confronted is the appellative function of the stem *mitra* which occurs beside the proper name. Whereas Gershevitch¹ is of the opinion that here we have to do with a case of accidental homonymy, that is to say, that there is a word *mitra* usually translated by "friend" beside the name of the god, with which it etymologically has nothing to do, Renou² held the view that the proper name has developed from the use of the stem *mitra* (of the god) as a common noun which initially denoted the abstract idea "alliance" to become a word for "friend" or "ally". Since I can accept neither view it seems worth while to enter further into this matter and to study the relations between the proper name and the common noun more closely, the more so as I am, with Renou, convinced that "les vertus essentielles (du dieu Mitra) résident dans son nom même"³ and the figure of this Vedic god continues to attract the attention of philologists and students of comparative religion.

Before proceeding to do so I would like to observe that, if I am not mistaken, the Vedic Mitra is the god who puts things right, who, while peacefully maintaining the fundamental and universal Order, regulates the contacts between men and the divine powers, the god who

1. I. GERSHEVITCH, *The Avestan hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge, 1959, p. 30. According to H. HUMMACH, in Festgabe-H. Lommel, Wiesbaden, 1960, p. 77, n. 5 both words are "zwar nahe miteinander verwandt (how?), aber nicht völlig gleich".

2. L. RENOU, *Études sur le vocabulaire du Rgveda*, Pondichéry, 1958, p. 51.

3. RENOU, *Études védiques et pāninéennes* (E.V.P.), VII, Paris, 1960, p. 4.

keeps the manifestations of that Order in the right condition, who stabilizes, redresses, adjusts, restores, appeases⁴, who also unites men⁵. Quite naturally the various sides of his character, among them his willingness to protect the worshipper, his friendliness⁶, his special relations with fire and daylight, do not as a rule come to the fore simultaneously⁷. I cannot subscribe to the translation of Mitra as "Contract" and the view that the god is the "personified" contract (*mitra*) defended for instance by my esteemed colleague Thieme⁸ and very recently by Benveniste⁹, mainly because I have not succeeded in discovering unmistakable traces of contracts, pacts or covenants in the proper senses of these terms in the Vedic texts dealing with this god.

Now, as to the use of the proper name and the common noun, Geldner¹⁰ and especially Renou¹¹ were inclined to believe that in many Vedic texts we have to do with a "double entendre" or a "sens superposé". That is to say, these scholars took the word, in one and the same place, in both meanings, suggesting that the double interpretation was intended and a stylistic feature of these texts. The question arises, however, as to the justification of such an interpretation which might imply that the god always, or at least in many contexts, was first and foremost the representative of what might, broadly speaking, be called "friendship". Moreover, we should, generally speaking, con-

4. Cf. e.g. KS. 25, 10: 118, 10 "by Mitra these creatures are appeased (pacified), by Varuṇa checked (suppressed)".

5. See RV. 5, 65, 6.

6. "Mitra, the very kind or favourable (one)" (TS. 1, 8, 16, 2 etc.).

7. The reader may be referred to a paper Mitra in India, intended for the abortive Intern. Congress of Mithraic studies, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1971, but to be published elsewhere.

8. P. THIEME, *Mitra and Aryaman*, New Haven Conn. (Transactions Connecticut Acad. of Arts and Sciences, 41), 1957, and see the same, *Der Fremdling in R̥gveda*, Leipzig, 1938, p. 106 "Mitra ist der Gott, der den Vertrag beschützt".

9. E. BENVENISTE, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, Paris, 1969, I, p. 96 ff. This interpretation of the name and character of the god, first proposed by A. Meillet, in *Journal asiatique*, 1907, II, p. 143 ff. and the etymology proposed by this savant (the I.E. root *mei-* "to exchange"), being no more (and no less) than legitimate hypotheses, should not assume the character of a dogma (see e.g. Renou, in L. RENOUE-J. FILLIOZAT, *L'Inde classique*, I, Paris, 1947, p. 318; the same in E.V.P. XVI, p. 73). The reticence of the Vedic texts with regard to "le contrat en tant qu'il repose sur un échange" cannot in my opinion be compensated for by a reference to the "guest-friendship" between Glaukos and Diomedes in Homer, *Iliad* 6, 120 ff.

10. K. F. GELDNER, *Der Rig-Veda übersetzt*, Cambridge Mass., 1951, II, p. 17 (on RV. 5, 16, 1) and elsewhere.

11. Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 68 and elsewhere.

sider many attempts at finding deliberate double entendres with all proper reserve, because their supposed occurrence may in fact be due to our imperfect knowledge of the language and the thoughts which it was the poet's intention to express. One may, in my opinion, sometimes raise also philological objections to such "double entendres". Thus RV. 5, 16, 1 "Agni, dem die Sterblichen mit Lobeserhebungen den Vorsitz geben wie einem Freunde (or, dem Mitra)" (Geldner) can hardly at the same time mean "comme on conclut un pacte"¹² because in that case the words *dadbhiré puráh* would be disconnected from each other.

The poet of RV. 10, 89, 8 aims at a variety of faithless and disloyal people who violate the presence or manifestations (*dhāma*¹³) of Mitra and Varuṇa just like men who fail in their obligations (*minanti*) to an allied "friend"¹⁴, a *mitra* who is a "yoke-fellow" or "associate" (*yújam*). Is this a double pun? No, rather the expression of the belief that disloyalty is as blameworthy as any other offence against these gods, because the same stanza, invoking Indra, the god who demands fulfilment of obligations, unreservedly states that this god extirpates every form of wickedness.

These remarks à propos of the supposed cases of double entendre — to which we shall have to revert — are not however to deny that sometimes one may indeed waver between both interpretations¹⁵. For instance, at RV. 10, 147, 5, where Indra is, like Agni, identified with Mitra after the request to give spaciousness and wealth, the translation "friend" (of course, in the Vedic sense of the word) is possible also, and is just as well motivated by the prayer contained in the first half of the stanza. When the poet of RV. 10, 22, 1 and 2 puts and answers the question where Indra's name is heard and among whom this god is much respected like a *mitra* the second explication furnished by the commentator Sāyaṇa ("like a companion or assistant": *sakbā*) is no doubt preferable to "like the Sun" (with whom the god Mitra was in later times to fuse), but I would not object to the interpretation that

12. Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 114.

13. Cf. J. GONDA, *The meaning of the Sanskrit term dhāman*, Amsterdam Acad., 1967, p. 38.

14. RENOU, *Études*, p. 51.

15. In connection with RV. 9, 77, 5 where Soma is said to have been pressed out as Mitra — here I am inclined to write the word under discussion with a capital letter — Renou, E.V.P. IX, p. 89 regards it as "semi-appellatif".

Indra displays the traits of character which are proper to his colleague Mitra¹⁶.

Although there are, as far as I am able to see, no unequivocal Vedic texts attesting to the custom of making ceremonial friendships¹⁷, be it, in view of the spread of this institution in other times and other countries¹⁸, far from me to deny the possibility of its existence¹⁹. But, even if Vedic man knew a mode of making friends which can justly be called a contract or covenant, this cannot, as far as appears from the texts, have been more than one aspect of what he denoted by the term *mitram*. Nay, it cannot have been its central or most proper sense, because many text-places point to the predominance of other aspects of what may broadly be called "friendship".

Thus the man with whom a young woman enters into a regular marriage is at RV. 10, 27, 12 called a *mitra*. I would hesitate to affirm²⁰ that here the idea of a pact (the marriage) is much in prominence, because in the same context the poet says that that young woman is much gratified by the "powerful"²¹ gifts offered to her by

16. When in a prayer for the good of a kingdom it reads (AVPaipp. 10, 4, 9) "Speaking the truth, cultivating benevolence, winning (observing) Mitra (devoting oneself to 'friendship?') let people make comrades (with one another: *sakhyam*)", it is, in my opinion, as difficult to decide how to translate *mitram* as it is hazardous to assert that this term must mean "Contract" (or "contract") because of the words "speaking the truth". The phrase *mitram kṛnute* recurs AVPaipp. 15, 22, 5 *mitram digbhiḥ kṛnuṣva jātaveda āśābhīr mitram adhipā vi paśyaḥ / mā no hīṃsīr divyenāgninā ...* and 9 ... *mitram enena kṛnmabe*.

17. I am not convinced of the necessity to use the French "pacte" or the English "pact" in translating the texts enumerated by Renou, E.V.P. XVI, p. 64 f. (RV. 8, 35, 12).

18. For "institutionalized friendship", which has been an important feature of the social organization of many peoples, see e.g. J. DRIEBERG, *The best friend among the Didinga (Africa)*, in Man 35 (1935), p. 101 f.; D. G. MANDELBAUM, *Friendship in North America*, in Man 36 (1936), p. 205 f.; I. H. HOGGIN, *Puberty to marriage, a study of the sexual life of the natives of Wogeo, New Guinea*, in Oceania 16 (1946-47), p. 185 ff.; M. J. HERSKOVITZ, *Man and his works*, publ. by A. A. Knopf, New York, 1949, p. 303 ff.; and see A. W. HOWITT, *The native tribes of Central Australia*, London, 1904, p. 712 ff.

19. Discussing particular modes of forming unity and mentioning the desirable results falling to him who knows these the author of ĀiĀ. 3, 1, 6 states that it is speech which "unites" (*sambhā*: "composes") the Vedas and the metres and that it is speech which "unites" (*sambhā*) friends and all beings. If the "friends" were alone in being united by speech it could seem obvious that this "friendship" exclusively was a contractual bond. As it is, however, this passage does not say more than that in forming friendship words — and we may even understand: more or less conventional phrases — were spoken.

20. Cf. RENOU, *Études*, p. 51.

21. For the meaning of the adjective *panyas* see my remarks in Oriens, 2 (1949), p. 195 ff. (esp. p. 201) and for the significance of gifts and property made over to another person M. MAUSS, *Essai sur le don*, Année sociologique, N.S. 1 (1925) (= M. MAUSS, *The gift*, London, 1954) and, e.g., G. VAN DER LEEUW, *Religion in essence and manifestation*, London, 1938, ch. 50.

the young man who wants to marry her, describing her also as a blessed or fortunate (*bhadrā*) woman who has succeeded in winning a bridegroom. Since this girl is explicitly contrasted with the poor blind girl described in the preceding stanza whose fate it is to remain a spinster, it would appear to me that the poet has in view, not the legal or ceremonial, but the human aspects of marriage. I readily admit that the term *mitra* used in this context implies not only the ideas of affection and intimacy, but also those of support and refuge expected from a well-wisher. One might compare also RV. 5, 52, 14 where, in a simile, a girl is said to invite her *mitra*; here also there is no trace of contractual obligations.

It seems also to be an exaggeration to speak of a *mitra's* indispensability in what we would call contracting legal alliances. The fortunate girl meant in RV. 10, 27 is said to have found her *mitra jāne*, a term which in all probability means "among other people, among those who do not belong to her own family"²². Renou²³ may be right in holding that there is "quelque subtile connivence entre *jāna* et *mitrá*" because at 10, 68, 2 the *mitra* functions as the spokesman or man of confidence who unites husband and wife, but I am afraid that I cannot follow him in translating this simile "comme l'ami dans le groupe (familial consacre) mari et femme". To all appearance we have to do here with the man of confidence sent out as a wooer (cf. RV. 2, 6, 7 *dūtó jānyeva mītryah*; ĀpGS. 2, 4, 1 speaks of *subṛdah*). I agree with Renou²⁴ that the term under discussion does not simply mean "amical", but not that it should express the idea of "exécutant un contrat". It rather denotes the man whose mediation and kind offices are — of course in accordance with tradition and habitual practice — invoked²⁵.

To Thieme's²⁶ translation of the stanza RV. 10, 89, 9: "Sharpen thy weapon, O Indra, against those without contract (*amitreṣu*) who violate deceitfully a contract (*mitram*)" one might object, first, that

22. Cf. RENOUE, *Études*, p. 34 f. and his remarks in E.V.P. VII, Paris, 1960, p. 19 f. (which I cannot entirely endorse) and E.V.P. XII, Paris, 1964, p. 112. (See also further on).

23. RENOUE, *l. c.*

24. RENOUE, E.V.P. VII, p. 20.

25. I cannot subscribe to Geldner's translation of *mitrām ... jāne* (RV. 8, 23, 8) "Volksfreund"; nor am I convinced of the "double entendre" assumed by RENOUE, E.V.P. XIII, p. 151. "Bundesgenosse" is also at RV. 10, 22, 1 preferable to "Volksfreund" (Geldner, o.c., III, p. 157).

26. P. THIEME, *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 62.

people without a contract can hardly be expected to violate a contract and in the second place, that the nouns beginning with the privative prefix, generally speaking, do not only express the idea of contradiction (for instance: "not hot" as opposed to "hot"), but also that of contrariety ("cold" as opposed to "hot")²⁷. In the R̥gveda and elsewhere an *amitra* is not a person who simply is no friend and may be indifferent or impartial, but a practically irreconcilable enemy²⁸ who is, or should be, combatted, conquered, driven away, kept at bay, cursed, destroyed (1, 133, 1; 6, 25, 2; 6, 33, 4; 6, 73, 2 and 3; 6, 75, 16; 7, 32, 25; 8, 75, 10; 9, 97, 54; 10, 89, 15; 103, 4; 10, 131, 1; 10, 152, 3 etc.). An *amitra* obviously was a person with whom one was on decidedly bad terms rather than not on "friendly" terms, a person, with whom peace was broken and with whom good and normal relations were interrupted or were altogether non-existent. One might perhaps suppose the poet — who uses *mitrām* and *amitreṣu* in this same stanza 10, 89, 9 — to have given a sort of definition of an *amitra*: a man who offends against Mitra *cum suis*²⁹.

Let us now turn to some Vedic passages which in a greater or less degree give us some positive information on thoughts evoked in Vedic man in using the word *mitra* usually translated by "friend, ally" or "friendship, alliance". Notwithstanding the difficulties presented by RV. 10, 7, 5³⁰ I am inclined to include this place also among those which give us indications of the behaviour of a divine or human being who represents the idea expressed by this term. Agni, to whom the hymn is dedicated³¹, is said to be *mitrām iva prayógam* which seems to mean one "who unites, directs, orders, accomplishes like a 'friend' (Mitra)"³²,

27. I refer to my chapter on *ahimsā* in Four studies in the language of the Vedas, The Hague, 1959, p. 95 ff.

28. Cf. e.g. also AV. 11, 9, 21.

29. I would therefore even avoid translating, with Geldner (o.c., III, p. 285), by "Unfreunde".

30. For which see H. Oldenberg, R̥gveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten, II, Berlin, 1912, p. 202; Geldner, o.c., III, p. 129 f.; Renou, E. V. P. XIV, p. 68 (too complicated). In any case *prayoga* is not "coming to the meal" (H. GRASSMANN, *Wörterbuch zum R̥g-Veda*, Leipzig, 1873 (1936), 880; Petersb. Wörterbuch, IV, 1059; see Oldenberg, o.c.).

31. If my interpretation is right, which as to the structure of the first line follows that proposed by Geldner, not Renou's (E.V.P. XIV, p. 6) translation.

32. Compare the use of the verb *pra-yuj-*: RV. 1, 48, 4; 1, 186, 9; 5, 52, 8; 10, 33, 1; AV. 19, 56, 1.

i.e. "who takes things (i.e. the interests of his worshippers) in hand"³³. That is to say, the god Agni offers his good offices as behoves a dear "friend" (RV. 6, 48, 1).

The beneficence and helpfulness of a *mitra* are also apparent from the application of the word to the soma juices (RV. 9, 101, 10) which are described as pure, well-minded, light-winning *mitras*³⁴. Assistance and helpfulness are no doubt implied in the request addressed to the god Indra in RV. 2, 11, 14: "Give us a dwelling, *mitra*³⁵ and (the assistance of) the host of the Maruts".

If AV. 2, 5, 3 — in accordance with the usual interpretation — speaks of "Indra, a swiftly-overcoming 'friend' (viz. of all beings) who overpowered his enemies" there is nothing to prevent us from taking his friendly offices as a manifestation of a Mitraic trait of character. The stanza AV. 11, 5, 15 presents some difficulties, but so much is clear that the Veda student who is highly extolled as an extremely mighty being is said to act as a friend furnishing whatever was desired.

Under certain circumstances *mitras* are supposed to present a common front with one's relatives: imprecating evil upon a rival the wish is expressed that he will be expelled (from the community), hated by "friends" and avoided by his own kin (AV. 9, 2, 14)³⁶.

Among those forms of well-being which are expected from a *mitra* is safety or absence of fear: an Atharvavedic hymn winds up with (19, 15, 6) "Safety from 'friend', safety from enemy (*amitra*) ..., safety for us by night and by day; be all regions my 'friend' (*mitram*)". Hence no doubt the prayer in another text addressed to Night: "Night willingly extends over me with excellent fresh vigour (refreshment) like a friend" (19, 49, 2).

From ŚB. 2, 3, 2, 12 it may be inferred that it was characteristic of a "friend" that he does not harm: "Truly, this brahman is everybody's 'friend' (*mitram*), he harms nobody". Cf. 5, 3, 2, 7. Elsewhere

33. Perhaps the Dutch "die zich voor (iets, de belangen van zijn vereerders) spant" would be a more adequate translation or "who takes up the cudgels for".

34. There is much to be said in favour of the commentator's interpretation of AV. 6, 7, 1 where Soma, invoked for blessings, is asked to come by that road by which Aditi or Mitra and his brothers, i.e. the twelve Ādityas or sons of Aditi, go, free from malice. Whitney-Lanman, however, preferred "Aditi or friends".

35. Geldner, o.c., I, p. 289: "den Mitra (einen Verbundeten)".

36. The woman who, in AVP. 1, 60, contrives to destroy a female rival not only boasts of her own superior power but mentions her intention to create friendly feelings (st. 3 *mitrāṇi kalpayan*) in her house.

the same brāhmaṇa (12, 6, 1, 11) goes further: the performance of a definite oblation accompanied by the formula "To Mitra hail!" makes a man a representative of the god to whom the sacrifice submits itself; then he repels evil.

The idea conveyed by the term *mitra* is explained at ŚB. 3, 3, 3, 10, where the words "come to us as a 'friend' (*mitro na ehi*)" are said to mean "come as kind (or benign, benevolent) and auspicious (propitious) one" (*śivo na śānta ehi*). Stating that Indra is about to drink soma, the poet of RV. 8, 12, 12 speaks of him as *sanir mitrāsya* which I would like to understand as "granting 'friendship'". Viṣṇu striding three times in order to enable Indra to perform his famous deed of heroism acts in accordance with the customary conduct of a "friend" (*mitrāsya dhārmabhiḥ*, 8, 52, 3). That a *mitra* was obviously expected to further the interests of those related to him may also be inferred from AiĀ. 2, 2, 3: "This food of mine is my 'friend', my *dakṣiṇam*", a term which must mean "something pleasant or beneficial"³⁷.

The idea of active benevolence is also clearly expressed by the adjective *mitriya* occurring in formulas such as that with which the man who has been absent for some time should greet his house: "With mild, 'friendly' eye I come to the house, well-disposed, saluting respectfully" (AV. 7, 60, 1)³⁸. Returning home one pronounces this formula in order to "set the mind of the house and its inmates at ease", to convince them of one's kindness and the absence of sinister designs. It is therefore not surprising to hear of an esteemed *mitriya* guest (RV. 8, 19, 8)³⁹.

In a text enumerating the quarters of the universe, in each of which one of the great gods (Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Viṣṇu, Bṛhaspati) is expected to assist the man who is pronouncing the formula in order

37. Keith's translation (A. B. KEITH, *The Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, Oxford, 1909, p. 214) is "support".

38. Cf. also AV. 14, 2, 12. For the kind look etc. see my publication *Eye and gaze in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad., 1969, p. 51 ff.

39. Authorities (see GautDhS. 15, 12; Manu 3, 140) are agreed that it would be folly to contract a "friendship" through (an invitation to) a *śrāddha* (a ceremony for the benefit of dead relatives). The performance of this rite confers happiness, fame, prosperity, sons and heaven on the sacrificer, but if, influenced by personal and interested motives, he would aim at establishing "friendly" relations he would lose heaven (Manu) and in any case fail to obtain the reward for performing the *śrāddha* (Medhātithi). Obviously, such secondary motives are incomparable with the solemn character of the rite. One wonders however, why the text limits itself to alliances. Is it because these are an interested motive since one might expect benevolence from a *mitra*?

to give him "inaugurative" and physical power, the words "The regions, whose faces are (brilliant) with ghee must as 'friends' turn to me (assist me)" are repeated at the end of each stanza (AVPaipp. 2, 86)⁴⁰. This can hardly mean anything else than an invocation of the favour and protection of the gods residing in the quarters of the universe.

What this "friendship" means and involves emerges also from a brāhmaṇa passage (AiB. 8, 8, 13): "Having drunk he should give it (the drink) to whom he deems generous (gracious, favourable), for that is a manifest action of 'friendship' (*mitrasya*). Thus at the end he establishes it (*pratiṣṭhāpayati*) in a *mitra*; for he thus finds support (*pratiṣṭhati*) in a *mitra*". Support, that is a firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*), the steadiness for which Vedic man was eager, was decidedly appreciated as a benefit, as an advantage and a cause of welfare. When a man is well-established on his *pratiṣṭhā* there is a balance of power preventing the occurrence of dangerous influences and abnormal conditions. As soon as he has found a *pratiṣṭhā*, this "support" enables him to co-operate in establishing the right order⁴¹. The same thought is expressed at ŚB. 5, 3, 5, 13 stating that a nobleman is firmly established or supported by a "friend"⁴² just as a *nyagrodha* tree (the banyan or Indian fig-tree) is supported by its feet⁴³.

Another passage of some interest (AiB. 6, 20) gives evidence of the belief that, if a man knows what is to be known about a hymn of Viśvāmītra, the "Friend of all", all things become friendly to him, a fact which again is very much appreciated⁴⁴. In a similar passage (AiĀ. 1, 2, 2) Viśvāmītra is said to have been the "friend" of everybody (everything)⁴⁵ and everything is the "friend" of him who knows this.

"Friendly" relations might be reciprocal⁴⁶, as appears from ŚB. 6, 5, 4, 10: after referring to VS. 11, 62 = RV. 3, 59, 6 it is observed

40. In a similar stanza (ibid. 3, 35, 6) the predicate is in the singular neuter.

41. For *pratiṣṭhā* see my article in *Studia indologica internationalia*, I, Poona-Paris, 1954.

42. *mitreṇa vai rājanyah pratiṣṭhitah*; one might ask oneself whether the author considered the noun to be etymologically connected with *minoti* "to fix or fasten".

43. See J. Eggeling, in *Sacred Books of the East* (S.B.E.), 41, Oxford, 1894, p. 83, n. 3.

44. Cf. ŚB. 8, 1, 2, 6.

45. See e.g. also AiĀ. 2, 2, 1 reading "all whatsoever was his friend".

46. See e.g. also TB. 3, 8, 9, 2.

that a *mitra* does not injure (*hims-*) any one, nor does any one injure his *mitra*⁴⁷.

When the author of a brāhmaṇa observes that the king is the *mitra* of his competent court chaplain (AiB. 8, 27, 2), this no doubt means that he is expected to behave to this distinguished functionary who is regarded as half his own person (7, 26, 4), like a *mitra*, that is kindly and benevolently, according him a position of honour⁴⁸.

The Mitravindā sacrifice⁴⁹ which, in accordance with its name, enables the performer to acquire "friends"⁵⁰ (ŚB. 11, 4, 3; KātyŚS. 5, 12, 1; ĀśvŚS. 2, 11, 1 ff.⁵¹; ŚāṅkhŚS. 3, 7; MārKP. 51 [or 48], 48; 72 [or 69], 8) puts him also in possession of welfare or good fortune (*śrī*), a long life, and (according to ŚB. 11, 4, 3, 20) of kingship, the power of conquering repeated death and of securing a complete lifetime (*sarvam āyuh*). The institution of the rite was (ŚB.) associated with Śrī, the goddess of welfare and fortune. The considerably later MārKP. informs us that this rite produces affection between two persons who do not love each other and makes mention of its performance in order to vanquish a woman called "the Hater" (*dveṣaṇī*) who renders people hated. Here again, "friendship" consists in the creation or restoration of a situation which is considered good, advantageous and desirable from various points of view, and the term may in this connection cover also other conceptions of high excellence.

The purport of the statement that in front of a divine power or being, said to be "Boundlessness" (*amiti*) as well as "Destruction" (*nirṛti*) goes "Friendship" (*mitram*) and "Active Benevolence" (*maītram*) is one of the details which, in AVPaipp. 16, 46, 6 are hidden by the obscurity and ambiguity of the text. However, the following words: "With these two I would like to worship you; with these adoration to thee; with these come to us; with these speak in favour of us; with these take hold of us like a mother or father a son; here I am for you; release my body (me) ..." show that the formula is intended

47. In a formula quoted ŚB. 9, 3, 3, 10 f. mention is moreover made of a guide governor (or sustainer) of a friend, the guide being a god and his friend his worshipper.

48. As appears from the Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra (9, 3, 14) the king is competent to punish his purohita, but not too severely. Cf. also ŚB. 4, 1, 4, 1.

49. W. CALAND, *Altindische Zauberei. Darstellung der altindischen "Wunschopfer"*, Amsterdam Acad., 1908, p. 134 f.

50. This is not in ŚSS.

51. *mitrāṇi yathā vindate sā mitravindā* (Gārgya Nārāyaṇa on ĀśvŚS. 2, 11, 1).

to prevail upon a mighty being to resort to *mitram* and *maitram*. This being might proceed to destroy the person speaking, but is now requested to send, so to say, these two benevolent harbingers.

Addressing a person by name excludes enmity (ŚB. 13, 1, 6, 1) and a refusal to mention a name may be understood as an indication of bad intentions, such as disregard, contempt or indifference⁵². Hence the statement: "He has addressed them by name, he has made 'friends' with them, for when one addresses a 'friend' by name one makes 'friends' with him" (MS. 1, 5, 9: 78, 3). In the next section of the same text mention is made of making "friends" while worshipping with "friendship" (*maitryā*) and pronouncing the stanza RV. 3, 59, 6 *mitrasya* ... (1, 5, 10: 79, 10) which forms part of the hymn dedicated to Mitra.

From other texts which need no translation it appears that a *mitra* may be an ally or a person whose victory is wished for⁵³; whose interests are furthered by a ruler who therefore on the occasion of his consecration is called "an increaser of 'friends'"⁵⁴ or "of the power represented by Mitra". "Friendship" or "alliance" (*mitram*) is as a complementary concept coupled with the idea of "harmony" or "unanimity" (*saṃjñānam*, MS. 4, 5, 2: 65, 13). It belongs to *mitras* to offer, for instance, a refreshing or wholesome drink (RV. 3, 58, 4). A *mitra* is qualified as very dear (*pariprīta*, RV. 1, 190, 6); as respectful and well-disposed (cf. AV. 7, 60, 1); as somebody "whom it would be difficult to restrain" (*durniyāntuḥ*: "que pour son malheur on tiendrait à l'écart", Renou⁵⁵: RV. 1, 190, 6). "Friendship" and mercy or pity are coupled in RV. 10, 34, 14.

The soma juices are RV. 9, 101, 10 described as "the best promoters of unimpeded progress, spotless friends, very attentive⁵⁶, finding the light of heaven". Extolling Soma a poet states (6, 44, 7) that this divine draught as a comparatively new "friend" (*mitrō nāvīyān*) —

52. J. GONDA, *Notes on names and the name of God in ancient India*, Amsterdam Acad., 1970, p. 78 f.

53. AV. 5, 20, 7. See the note by W. D. WHITNEY-CH. R. LANMAN, *Atharva-veda Saṃhitā*, Cambridge Mass., 1905, p. 256.

54. AV. 4, 8, 2 and 6 (*mitravardhana*; see also further on); TB. 2, 7, 8, 1 (but in the later repetition of the stanza in 2, 7, 16, 1 "killing many enemies").

55. Renou, E.V.P. XV, p. 51.

56. "aux bonnes intentions" (Renou, E.V.P. IX, p. 55). For *ādhī* see J. GONDA, *The vision of the Vedic poets*, The Hague, 1963, p. 224 f.

that is, no doubt, as the recently prepared soma — found (for Indra or the gods in general) the power or quality known as *dakṣa* “ability, expertness”. It is worth observing that in this stanza the god, who is a *mitra*, is also said to be a protector of (for) his “companions” (*sakhibhyaḥ*). It seems convenient to seize the opportunity here to expatiate upon the meaning of the noun *sakhi* which likewise is usually translated by “friend”. A brief comparison may help in bringing out the meaning of *mitra* more clearly. The main characteristics of the relation denoted by *sakhi* are actual or virtual reciprocity⁵⁷ and the idea of association or co-operation⁵⁸. In the Ṛgveda, in which the word is very frequent, human persons⁵⁹, gods⁶⁰ or animals⁶¹ can be each other’s *sakhi* “comrade, mate, associate, companion, friend”; men⁶² and gods⁶³ address their equals as *sakhi* if they for instance want them to do something, to join them in undertaking some task or activity or they use this word in speaking of them⁶⁴. Moreover, a human being can be a *sakhi* of a god⁶⁵, especially when he invokes his favour or protection, acts as the god’s helper, expects the god to further his well-being or interests; but a god is also man’s *sakhi*, for instance when his beneficial assistance or co-operation are emphasized⁶⁶. The gods and those who worship them or sing their praises are each other’s *sakhis*⁶⁷. The term is also applied to Indra’s horses in their relation to their master⁶⁸. Even food, invoked

57. Cf. e.g. 1, 26, 3; 1, 53, 7; 1, 72, 5; 1, 75, 4; 1, 100, 4; 3, 4, 1; 3, 31, 8; 5, 29, 7; 7, 18, 6; 8, 68, 11; 10, 42, 11; 10, 87, 21; 10, 112, 10. See also ĀpDhS. 1, 4, 14, 13.

58. Cf. e.g. 1, 30, 7; 1, 100, 2; 1, 136, 4; 3, 30, 1; 4, 16, 6; 4, 32, 35; 10, 6, 2; 10, 71, 8; 10, 85, 23; 10, 88, 17; 10, 179, 2.

59. Cf. e.g. 3, 18, 1; 8, 45, 37; 8, 48, 4; 9, 104, 5; 9, 105, 5; 10, 117, 4 or, more in general, 1, 185, 8; 8, 43, 14.

60. Cf. e.g. 1, 22, 19; 1, 31, 1; 1, 165, 11; 1, 170, 3; 3, 54, 17; 4, 1, 3; 4, 35, 7; 4, 41, 3; 4, 52, 3; 9, 86, 16.

61. Cf. 1, 164, 20.

62. Cf. e.g. 1, 5, 1; 1, 22, 8; 1, 41, 7.

63. Cf. e.g. 4, 18, 11; 4, 35, 3; 8, 100, 2; 12.

64. Cf. e.g. 2, 28, 10; 4, 3, 13.

65. Cf. e.g. 1, 53, 7; 11; 1, 91, 8; 3, 55, 22; 4, 12, 5; 4, 24, 6; 4, 31, 3; 7, 88, 6; 8, 4, 9; 8, 32, 13; 8, 93, 3; 9, 97, 43.

66. Cf. e.g. 1, 4, 10; 1, 63, 4; 1, 91, 15; 17; 1, 129, 4; 2, 1, 9; 2, 20, 3; 3, 51, 6; 4, 16, 18; 4, 17, 17 f.; 4, 25, 6; 4, 31, 1; 6, 33, 4; 6, 45, 1; 7, 55, 1; 8, 2, 39; 8, 13, 3; 8, 45, 1-3; 8, 71, 9.

67. Cf. e.g. 1, 30, 10 ff.; 1, 53, 2; 1, 75, 4; 1, 100, 4; 3, 4, 1; 3, 43, 4; 9, 66, 1; 4; 10, 42, 11; 10, 87, 21; 10, 112, 10. See also 3, 39, 5.

68. 3, 35, 4; 4, 43, 1; 4.

as a deity, is called man's *sakhi*⁶⁹. Returning for a moment to RV. 6, 44, 7 I have no doubts about the difference between *mitra* and *sakhi* occurring in the same context: those favoured are called the god's *sakhis*, but the god who provided them with a highly valued quality acted as a *mitra*, as a beneficent "friend" or ally to whom the ideas of equality and association are no more necessarily applicable than the expectation of reciprocity⁷⁰.

There is a certain similarity between this passage and 10, 29, 4 and 8, where it is said that many endeavour to enter into a *sakhi* relation with the god who has come as a true (*satyaḥ*) *mitra* in order to support or maintain them.

Attention has rightly been drawn⁷¹ to the reference, in RV. 10, 8, 4, to the seven steps, well known as an ever recurring rite in the marriage ceremonies, which more than other ritual acts performed on that occasion are considered to fasten the nuptial tie. It is however worth observing that, although Mbh. 3, 246, 35; 3, 297, 22; 8, 29, 21 and 13, 105, 8 speaks of *mitram* based on these seven steps (*saptapadam*)⁷², the fixed phrase used in the *grhyasūtras*⁷³ is *sakhā* (*sic*) *saptapadī* "a (female) companion of the seven steps", the relation itself being called *sakhyam* "companionship, (good-)fellowship". Moreover, at AV. 5, 11, 10 Varuṇa is addressed by someone who calls himself "thy suitable comrade (*sakhā*) of seven steps". If the word *mitra* denoted "contractual friendship and nothing else", why should it not be the fixed term to be used in referring to this formal entrance into an alliance? Returning to RV. 10, 8, 4 I must confess that I can neither read⁷⁴ in it an identification of Mitra with Fire, nor⁷⁵ a reference to the former's being the son of Agni. The meaning of the stanza is:

69. 1, 187, 3.

70. There must also be a semantic difference between *mitra* and *subrd*, lit. "kind-hearted, well-disposed" which does not occur in the oldest texts (cf. the *dvandva* compound in AVPar. 68, 2, 18 *subrynmitrasamāgamah*). However, V. S. AGRAWALA, *India as known to Pāṇini*, Lucknow, 1953, p. 96 f., probably goes too far in concluding from Pāṇini 5, 4, 150 *subrddurbr̥dau mitrāmitrayoh* that the grammarian marks out a friend by his goodness of heart, because *mitra* here serves to indicate the meaning of *subrd*.

71. See e.g. Geldner, o.c., III, p. 130.

72. Pet. Wtb. V, 910 quotes *satām saptapadam maitram* from the BrahmaPur.

73. See ĀsvGS. 1, 7, 19; ŚGS. 1, 14, 6; MGS. 1, 11, 18 and compare ĀpSS. 10, 23, 1 and RV. 8, 69, 7.

74. with Thieme, o.c., p. 84.

75. with Thieme, o.c., p. 49.

"Thou (Agni) hast put down the seven steps for (the sake of) Order, generating 'friendship, alliance' (probably, with Order) for thyself" ⁷⁶.

It is worth noticing that broken friendship ⁷⁷ is an ominous event which must be expiated (SB. 5, 6, 2). "Ebenso wie andere Vorzeichen muss auch ... Untreue zwischen Freunden — as an infringement of Order — ... gesühnt werden" ⁷⁸. Disloyalty, breaking faith with a friend results in some form of evil: JB. 2, 83 "He was attacked by indigestion, because he had been hostile to a 'friend' ⁷⁹, or had eaten food of enemies". See also AVPar. 67, 5, 1 where hostility of "friends" is, as an ominous occurrence, put on a par with loss of valuables; ibidem 72, 3, 11 hostility between friends requires a propitiatory rite. From JB. 1, 176 ⁸⁰ it may moreover be inferred that one should speak favourably of (praise) a dear "friend" ⁸¹. The term used is always *mitra* ⁸².

The character of a "friend" graced by these virtues appears to be in harmony with some conspicuous sides of the character of the god Mitra who is expected to restore the balance or to achieve appeasement of various manifestations of evil such as fire (AV. 3, 21, 8), disease (1, 3, 2) or impetuous enemies (3, 6, 2) ⁸³. At AV. 2, 6, 4; VS. 27, 5; TS. 4, 1, 7 e (cf. MS. 2, 12, 5) the translation "O Agni, bring yourself (*yat-*), with Mitra, in an actively benevolent (*mitra*) disposition" or "... to 'friendly offices' " ⁸⁴ seems even to be preferable to "... strive with thy 'friend' ". The commentator Mahīdhara, voicing the belief of a later period, goes further and takes Mitra to stand for the Sun. The right interpretation seems however to be that Agni, who is also elsewhere associated — or even identified — with Mitra, is invoked to

76. "Der Sinn ist: Du hast mit dem Gesetz (Rta) engste Freundschaft geschlossen" (Geldner, l.c.). Otherwise: Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 7.

77. For the Iranian development (*miθrō.drug* which is not synonymous with Skt. *mitradrohin*, as e.g. in *mitradroha* in Mbh. 17, 3, 15), which here is deliberately left on one side, see Gershevitch, o.c., p. 153.

78. H. KOHLBRUGGE, *Atharvaveda-Parīṣiṣṭa über Omina*, Thesis Utrecht, 1938, p. 103, referring to Adbhutabrahmaṇa 3, 6, 12.

79. W. CALAND, *Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, Amsterdam Acad., 1919, p. 146 translated: "weil er Wortbruch verübt hatte".

80. For the text see Caland, o.c., p. 69.

81. Quite intelligibly, a man may occasionally be supposed to act under pressure from "friends" (AV. 12, 3, 48; see J. GONDA, *The Savayajñas*, Amsterdam Acad., 1965, p. 418).

82. Hence also the compound *mitradrub*, e.g. TB. 1, 7, 1, 7.

83. Cf. also AV. 7, 30, 1; 19, 44, 10.

84. *mitrenāgne mitradhā yatasva*.

act, together with Mitra in that benevolent (*mitra*) disposition which is most characteristic of the latter. We might in this connection remember also that whilst arguing that the gods are all forms of Agni the author of AiB. 3, 4, 6 says: "In that Agni is dread of contact that is his form as Varuṇa (and) in that people approach him with 'friendly' action (*mitrakṛtyā*), that is his form as Mitra". The commentary, no doubt correctly, explains: those who suffer from cold draw near the fire to have a warm and — "approaching respectfully, honouring, worshipping (*upa-ās*)" — they do homage to Agni, this "worship" being the god's Mitra-form.

Mitra, proving to be the maintainer of settled associations, is indeed, at TB. 6, 4, 8, 1 and ŚB. 4, 1, 4, 8, explicitly said to be every one's *mitra* ("friend"), and that is why he refuses to join in killing Soma, the king. A similar passage is ŚB. 5, 3, 2, 7 stating that "Mitra injures no one", and, moreover, that this benevolence is reciprocal: "nor does any one injure Mitra ..., for Mitra is every one's friend". It is indeed inconceivable that Mitra should deal crookedly or dishonestly with the gods (RV. 10, 12, 5⁸⁵). The idea of being a "friend" of all" (*sarvasya mitram*) occurs also at TS. 2, 5, 2, 6 where the cow, being said to be the *mitra* of all, is related to have brought the *tejas* (brilliant energy) of Agni and Soma which had been lost, and to have enabled the gods (and the beings generally) to enjoy both enteties which are in her, viz. ghee, which is Agni's *tejas*, and milk which is Soma's. When in the same brāhmaṇa (6, 2, 9, 2) the wife of the sacrificer is related to anoint (a consecratory act) the oblation-holders "for (the sake of) 'friendship'", that is in order to make them friendly disposed towards the sacrificer, she is likewise described as a *mitram* of all.

RV. 4, 55, 5 cd it reads: "The Lord should protect us from that anxiety which comes from a category of people called *janya*, and Mitra may secure us against that which comes from⁸⁶ those who are known as *mitriya* or in which *mitras* are involved"⁸⁷. Since the opposite idea *janya* may be taken to refer to "strangers"⁸⁸, the adjective *mitriya* may safely be regarded as denoting a relation with a more or less close

85. See Renou's interpretation, E.V.P. XIV, p. 5 and 73.

86. This is the usual translation.

87. This place is discussed by Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 57; cf. also Thieme, o.c., p. 46.

88. Renou, in *Journal asiatique*, 231 (1939), p. 207 f.; W. RAU, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien*, Wiesbaden, 1957, p. 64 ff.

acquaintance. It is not completely certain who is meant by the Lord (*pati*) — probably Varuṇa; or Aryaman? — but so much is perfectly clear that a division of functions was supposed to exist between Mitra and one of those gods who are nearest to him, and that the former was invoked to redress grievances nursed by “friends” or to protect the worshipper from harm originating in the circle of those who are his *mitras*. There is a fine parallel in the Atharvaveda: Mitra and Varuṇa, who takes care of the worshippers (?), are, together with Agni, invoked to prevent a man from dying at an early age (AV. 2, 28, 2 and 5), but it is Mitra’s special function to protect him from that anxiety or distress (*am̐has*) which come from a *mitra* (st. 1)⁸⁹. Another argument in favour of the identity of the proper noun and the substantive is the simile (RV. 10, 115, 7) in which Agni is compared to “friends” who, being well-lodged (*sudhitāḥ*), are described as wishing to observe the sacred Order (*ṛtāyavaḥ*), the maintenance of which we know to be in Mitra’s province.

The relation between the god and “friendship” (*maitra*) is also apparent from ŚB. 2, 3, 2, 12: discussing the results of offering during the various phases of the sacrificial fire the author, stating that the waning fire belongs to Mitra, advises the man who wishes to consume food through the kindness (*maitra*, viz. of others, because in § 9 mention is made of eating food belonging to others) to offer at that moment.

At a definite stage of the rites performed to consecrate a king this royal sacrificer is called *mitravardhana*. The usual translation (e.g. AVŚ. 4, 8, 2) is no doubt correct, but another interpretation, viz. “contributing to the fulfilment of those functions which are Mitra’s” would suit the occasion just as well, because the king is responsible for the preservation of order. I am however convinced that the authors are not playing upon the word⁹⁰.

There can indeed be no doubt that the ritualists believed in the existence of a connection between Mitra and “friendship”: the mantra “I gaze at thee with the eye of Mitra” is TB. 3, 2, 4, 5 said to be

89. It may be remembered that the idea of a great god as a friend is well known to the historians of religion. It is a state of mind which excludes fear and servitude and may easily lead to, or even presuppose, mystic community with, and knowledge of, God. The reader may be referred to G. VAN DER LEEUW, *Religion in essence and manifestation*, London, 1938, p. 477 f.

90. AVPrāy. 6, 2 (J.A.O.S. 33, p. 135) the waters are said to be *mitrabhṛtaḥ kṣatrabhṛtaḥ*.

pronounced "with a view to — i.e. in order to bring about — 'friendship' " or rather a "settled association"⁹¹. The author of the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā is quite explicit: "By pronouncing the formula 'I gaze at you with Mitra's eye', one makes those concerned 'friends' " (*mitram*: MS. 4, 1, 5: 6, 16; 4, 1, 7: 9, 13). The words following in TS. 1, 1, 4, 1 etc. "Be not afraid, be not troubled, let me not harm thee" express a natural complement⁹². The absolved student who whishes to be dear to his "friends" must take the obligatory bath under the asterism Anūrādhā which belongs to this god (JGS. 1, 19). A similar injunction occurs ViS. 78, 22.

The same thought is expressed and amplified at ŚB. 6, 5, 4, 10 "for a 'friend' (or, Mitra) does not injure any one, nor does any one injure his friend (or, Mitra)": here this attitude and practice of *ahimsā* — that is of respect and consideration for life, of kindness, humanity, compassion and fellow-feeling — is obviously reciprocal⁹³. This statement is moreover preceded by a reference to the fact that as often as one attends to the fire (by adding fuel) one pronounces the stanza VS. 11, 62 (RV. 3, 59, 6) "The advantageous protection of the god Mitra, the support of (cultivating) men, is glorious and of most wonderful renown". Besides, the above words (ŚB. 6, 5, 4, 10) occur unequivocally in connection with this god: ŚB. 5, 3, 2, 7.

The very fact that maintenance of order and authority are implicit in the *mitram* which is spontaneously formed between cattle walking on without a herdsman (RV. 7, 18, 10) is — if this interpretation is right⁹⁴ — an argument for the thesis that the noun and the proper name are identical: the animals place themselves towards or with regard to *mitram*, the divine power which in a peaceful manner maintains Order.

I now return to some of the text-places which have given rise to differences of opinion⁹⁵. Does *mitra*, as was for instance Grassmann's

91. Cf. J. GONDA, *Eye and gaze in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad., 1969, p. 42; 44. See e.g. also Rām. 1, 51, 17; 2, 86, 7.

92. Cf. also TĀ. 5, 3, 6 *maitriyopaiti śāntyai*.

93. That the relations between a man and his *mitra* were different from the standard rules of conduct and relations between any given person and his congeners or fellow-clansmen appears for instance from the precept that he who has unintentionally killed a brahman, another man engaged in sacrificing, a pregnant woman or a "friend" must perform the same severe rite of atonement (ViSm. 50, 6 ff.).

94. See Geldner, o.c., II, p. 196.

95. For the difficult stanza RV. 1, 151, 2 see Renou, E.V.P. VII, p. 34 (I object to "le Contrat").

conviction⁹⁶, stand here either for "friend" or for the name of the god or, as Renou is sometimes inclined to believe, for both? At RV. 1, 67, 1, the god Agni is said to be conquering in the wood and a *mitra* among men. Geldner⁹⁷ translates: "unter Menschen der Freund", Renou⁹⁸ "(égal à) Mitra pour les mortels", Mitra with a capital letter and *égal à* in brackets. It would rather appear to me that the "double sense" assumed by the French scholar⁹⁹ is an "optical illusion", that is to say that it is due to our way of thinking. The god was no personified abstract idea. Nor was a manifestation of what for convenience may be called "friendship" something that has nothing to do with the god. The god displayed his characteristic features and proved himself to be a reality whenever and wherever he functioned; he made his presence felt in every representation of his character or re-iteration of his characteristic deeds. If there was a god who represented or supervised "friendship", every display of loyalty, every case of alliance, every manifestation of friendly feeling and behaviour was his and a *hic et nunc* representation of his nature, an embodiment of the idea he stood for. Since language is a reflection of a particular state of culture following in its development the demands of that culture, it is *a priori* highly probable that passages such as that under discussion are untranslatable in any modern European language, that is to say that our idioms cannot succinctly express the thoughts and feelings, the images and emotions evoked in Vedic man by the at first sight simple statement (*agnīr mārteṣu mitrāb*). Now it must be remembered, on the one hand that Vedic gods are not infrequently "identified" with each other, that is to say that a god is said to fulfill a function of one of his colleagues¹⁰⁰, and that Agni, as already observed, is often described as maintaining close relations with Mitra or as assuming the part of the latter¹⁰¹. On the other hand, Agni is frequently represented as displaying characteristics that are typical of a "friend": he, the guest in every house, is dear to human communities (RV. 6, 1, 6), and is their favourer

96. GRASSMANN, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda*, 1038 f.

97. GELDNER, *o.c.*, I, p. 88.

98. Renou, E.V.P. XII, p. 14.

99. Renou, E.V.P. XII, p. 88.

100. Cf. e.g. RV. 10, 8, 5 "Thou (Agni) hast become Varuṇa, because thou exertest thyself for the sake of Order".

101. It is my intention to deal with this point at greater length in another publication.

and protector (1, 1, 6; 1, 44, 10; 1, 36, 2; 13); he gives them what they want to have (7, 42, 4; 8, 60, 6) etc. There is therefore hardly any doubt that in RV. 1, 67, 1 Agni's being a *mitra* among men¹⁰² means also that he shows these sides of his character and in doing so gives evidence of impersonating those features which are typically Mitra's, or rather which, if conceived as divine functions, are Mitra.

It is therefore intelligible that elsewhere (RV. 2, 4, 1) stating that Agni is worth being won or sought¹⁰³ *mitrá iva*, Geldner translates "Freund" and Renou — needlessly, in my opinion — prefers the proper noun.

In a long prayer for safety (KS. 37, 10) several powers, including the six spaces and the intermediate regions of the universe, are invoked to protect those on behalf of whom the text is used. In addition to the repeated expression of a longing for being *anamitra* "without 'enemies'" the author implores also a potency called *mitradbhāḥ* "granting or bestower of or giving concrete shape to *mitra*" which is invited "to place us in *mitra*". This must mean: "to cause us to attain, or to have a share in *mitra*", that is, no doubt, "in a good, normal, stable condition, in good order implying adequate redress of anything wrong" or to express the same prayer otherwise: "Cause us to stand high in the favour of the god Mitra". For the compound compare *varivodhāḥ* "granting space, relief, freedom etc." (RV. 9, 1, 3) and *dhāmadbhāḥ* (RV. 9, 86, 28) "who establishes, develops or assumes locations of divine power or modalities of his divine nature"¹⁰⁴. This place should not be disconnected from (VS. 4, 27; TS. 1, 2, 7, 1; 6, 1, 11, 1; MS. 1, 2, 6: 15, 2; KapS. 1, 19; 37, 7 etc.) the formula accompanying — "for atonement" — the giving of a she-goat to the soma-seller from whom the soma is taken in exchange: "As a 'friend' the giver of good friends (*sumitradbhāḥ* or *-dbhāḥ*) approach us" (the subject of the imperative being the soma).

There is no necessity to translate the term *mitradbhaya*¹⁰⁵ with Monier-Williams and others as "a covenant or contract of friendship". As

102. Cf. also RV. 1, 151, 1 and Renou's comment (E.V.P. VII, p. 34).

103. An etymological relative of the form used in RV. 10, 18, 8 used to express the idea of "suitor; seeking the favours of a woman".

104. GONDA, *Dhāman*, p. 94 f.

105. See J. WACKERNAGEL-A. DEBRUNNER, *Altindische Grammatik* II, 2, Göttingen, 1954, p. 725; 827. The poet of RV. 1, 120, 9 uses *mitrádhibi* for which see ibidem, p. 827. For *mitram* with *dhā-* see also Geldner, o.c., I, p. 463.

appears from TB. 3, 1, 2, 1 it obviously constitutes or implies that which the worshippers of the god Mitra expect to receive from him ("the fortune, welfare of happiness which is to be produced or allotted by Mitra"): "May we have success with our oblations, having reverentially approached (worshipped) god Mitra; let there exist 'friendly' relations (*mitradheyam*) with him". The commentator is no doubt right: the author means "the happiness which is to be brought about by (expected from) Mitra ('friendship')". In the aetiological myth related TB. 3, 1, 5, 1 ff. some gods are said to have wished something which is congenial to them, Indra being desirous of precedence, Pūṣan of cattle, and Mitra — in harmony with the other passage — of *mitradheyam* with (or toward, for) these worlds. Similarly, RV. 1, 170, 5 *mitrāṇām mitrapate dhēṣṭhaḥ* means "O lord of 'friendship', thou givest most friendships"; cf. also 4, 33, 10.

The translation proposed of the words *iti nama evāsmā etat karoti, mitradheyam evainenaitat kurute* ŚB. 3, 3, 4, 24 "Thereby (i.e. by reciting a definite stanza) he renders homage to it (the victim) and makes it a token of the covenant"¹⁰⁶ is not convincing and should in my opinion be replaced by "... and thereby establishes 'friendly' relations with it"¹⁰⁷. As is well known, various provisions are made against the revenge of the victim which should be "quieted", not "killed" (ŚB. 13, 2, 8, 2)¹⁰⁸, and so "something is to be made for 'friendship'". This is especially clear in ŚB. 3, 8, 5, 11: the water of the purificatory bath is addressed with the formula "The waters and plants must be 'friendly' unto us, 'unfriendly' to him who hates us and whom we hate", because, the author explains, the waters keep as it were receding from the man who performs the act mentioned in the preceding paragraph which might injure water and plants; but by this recitation he establishes "friendly" relations (*mitradheyam kurute*) with them. (See also 12, 9, 2, 6). At RV. 8, 96, 6 those speaking strive after Indra's benevolence (*indreṇa mitrām didhiṣema*); here the cognate verb is used in a corresponding sense. Cf. also 10, 108, 3. ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 18 f. gives evidence of a mutuality of this relation: by paying homage to Mother Earth, Brhaspati entered (and the sacrificer enters) into *mitradheyam* with

106. Eggeling, in S.B.E. 26, p. 83 (*mitradheyam evainenaitat kurute*). At 5, 2, 1, 18 f.; 5, 4, 3, 20 Eggeling's translation is correct.

107. Notice the verbal from *kurute*.

108. D. J. HOENS, *Sānti*, Thesis Utrecht, 1951, p. 49 f.

her, "for a mother does not hurt her son, nor does a son hurt his mother" (similarly, 5, 4, 3, 2 f.). From 3, 8, 5, 1; 12, 9, 2, 6; 13, 8, 4, 5; 14, 3, 1, 27 it moreover appears that a power whose "friendly" sympathy has been won may by means of an additional formula be made an ally against an enemy¹⁰⁹.

It is difficult not to co-ordinate with these expressions the phrase *mitró ná súdhitah*, which, occurring in RV. 4, 6, 7; 5, 3, 2; 6, 15, 2 (*mitráṃ ná yám súdhitam bhṛgavo dadbhūh*); 8, 23, 8 and translated as "wohl aufgenommen wie ein Freund" or "... wie Mitra (ein Freund)" (Geldner), applies to Agni (cf. also 10, 115, 7). It led Renou¹¹⁰ to write the following note which seems to overshoot the mark: "Bien placé (= en bonne situation morale) comme un ami, mais aussi et davantage 'bien conclu comme un Contrat (*sic*): la formule n'a toute sa raison d'être qu'à la faveur de ce second sens". In my opinion the meaning of these places can hardly be more than "Agni (who elsewhere is called a friend or companion of the sacrificer: 1, 26, 5; 1, 94, 1 etc., and his guest: 8, 74, 7 etc.) well placed as a friend" — which, because Fire is a divine person may mean: "taken in, lodged as a 'friend' ". This is the meaning of the adjective at 4, 50, 8 (of a human person "bien placé en sa demeure propre"¹¹¹)¹¹². In view of Agni's relations with Mitra¹¹³ the name of this god may in the above places be heard also. It is true that at 2, 4, 3 and 6, 15, 2 the word *mitra* is used, but here also I am unable to detect any indication of the conclusion of a contract¹¹⁴; at 2, 4, 3 Agni is compared to a "friend" who acts, if not as a "Mittler" (Geldner), as a benevolent protector who helps people live quietly and peacefully. Compare 8, 31, 14, invoking Agni like a

109. The occurrence of the compound *mitrádhitāni* at RV. 10, 100, 4 (Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 129) should be compared to RV., 6, 67, 9 where the locations of Mitra-Varuna's divinity and their special function, preservation of order, are conceived of as "instituted" or "established" (*-dhitā-*) by these gods themselves: the translation "to conclude an alliance" may suit this context better than "to make 'friends' ". Cf. also RV. 1, 120, 9; 1, 170, 5; 7, 18, 10. For RV. 10, 132, 5 and other places see also The Vedic god Mitra, ch. XI.

110. Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 98, and see *Études*, p. 51.

111. Renou, E.V.P. XV, p. 64.

112. For the corresponding use of the verb *dhā-* see 1, 58, 6; 2, 4, 2 and 3; 6, 15, 2.

113. With which I intend to deal elsewhere.

114. Otherwise Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 134. The meaning "to reconcile, to agree with" expressed by *saṃ-dhā-* in later texts does not, as far as I am able to see, belong to Vedic *dhā-*.

friend who arranges a controversy (who fixes the landmarks of contested property)¹¹⁵.

This seems a convenient place to insert some observations on a use of the term *mitra* which, perhaps with some exaggeration, may be regarded as belonging to a military or political sphere of thought. For a better understanding of the function of a *mitra* in ancient Indian "social and political thought" MS. 4, 4, 2: 52, 9 f. is not without interest. When the unction is administered to a person who is to be consecrated king a man, sympathetic, but probably not belonging to his nearest relations¹¹⁶, should use an unction cup made of *nyagrodha* wood, because, it is argued, dominion is "extended downwards" by a *mitra*, the *nyagrodha* tree by the shoots which it sends down; (by doing so) one "extends" one's dominion "downwards" by means of a *mitra* in order to make it firm and to prevent it from suffering want of care or energy. One consolidates one's position by an ally. Although Renou's translation of RV. 10, 132, 5 "(une fois) le pacte conclu il tue les guerriers qui avaient pris refuge" seems to lay undue stress on the concept of "pact", the idea evoked in this difficult passage may therefore be that when "friendship" has been formed the man who incurs guilt¹¹⁷ is sure to be slain by some potent being or procedure¹¹⁸. That a *mitra* was supposed to lend assistance appears for instance from an appeal made, in a text addressed to the battle-demon Arbudi (AV. 11, 9, 2; 26), to "the *mitras*, troop of gods" to equip themselves for help¹¹⁹. It stands to reason that in time of war the help of *mitras* is invoked against "enemies" (*amitra*: AV. 5, 20, 8). For the opposition see also AV. 2, 28, 3 and see 3, 3, 5¹²⁰. At first sight a statement such as SB. 1, 5, 3, 17 "whichever of the two combatants a 'friend' (or, rather, an ally:

115. Here I agree with RENOU, *Vocabulaire*, p. 52.

116. It is, here again, not easy to determine the exact meaning of the phrase *janya mitra*. Caland (ÄpSS. 18, 16, 2 ff.): "ein Freund aus der Ferne"; W. RAU, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien*, Wiesbaden, 1957, p. 89 (who does not mention this place): *janya* "ein Landfremder"; J. C. HEESTERMAN, *The ancient Indian royal consecration*, Thesis Utrecht, 1957, p. 118, n. 24 adduces some arguments in favour of its referring to some kind of kinship, in particular to the family, clan or tribe to which the sacrificer is allied by marriage.

117. Cf. RV. 10, 10, 11.

118. Cf. Renou, E.V.P. VII, p. 64.

119. Cf. also SB. 5, 3, 5, 13 and compare RAU, *o.c.*, p. 73: "Durch einen Freund steht der Adlige fest".

120. Instead of AVS. 5, 20, 10 "conquering a host" AVPaipp. 9, 24, 10, in addressing the war-drum reads "producing 'friendship'".

mitram) joins he obtains the victory" does not seem to point only to reinforcements thanks to which a combatant will score an advantage. Yet it is perhaps no matter of indifference that the term indicating the assistance is *mitram*. There is not however any indication of a contract, covenant or even promise on the strength of which the ally was obliged to lend assistance.

In a definite ritual context ¹²¹ the sacrificer, while touching all parts of his body one after another, has to pronounce the formulas (VS. 20, 5 f.) "My head be good fortune (grace, loveliness: *śrī*), my mouth fame ..., my voice be greatness, my mind fury, etc."; the last identification, however, is "conquering or overwhelming strength (*sahas*) be my friend!".

The oldest texts to attest to a "political" connotation of the term under discussion probably ¹²² are RV. 1, 129, 10 where "l'idée d'alliance en cas de danger extérieur est marquée" ¹²³: "Greatness shall accompany thee, like an ally, for rendering assistance" and 9, 97, 30 "No more than a king does the wise one (Soma) infringe the alliance". Geldner taking *mitram* as an accusative going with "thee" obviously regarded the person favoured by "Greatness" as the ally. This seems right on the understanding that the god Indra who is addressed is not the ally of the power concept "Greatness" but of the person speaking, who expects the god to render him assistance as an ally. That is why the ally should be great ¹²⁴.

Now in order to gain an insight into what the idea of *mitra* meant for Vedic man we may in addition to a thorough examination of the pertinent texts have recourse to some secondary sources of knowledge. In view of the marked tendencies to continuity which are so characteristic of the history of Indian culture it seems a legitimate method to examine post-Vedic texts in order to discover whether, or to what extent, the information gathered from these is in harmony with conclusions drawn from Vedic texts or may even shed some light on the

121. The Sautrāmaṇi. See J. GONDA, *Die Religionen Indiens*, I, Stuttgart, 1960, p. 173.

122. If *ná* stands for *ná ná* (see H. OLDENBERG, *Rgveda. Textkritische und exegetische Noten*, II, Berlin, 1912, p. 179); notice the structure of the pādas a and c. See also the translations by GELDNER, *o.c.*, III, p. 98 and Renou, E.V.P. IX, p. 49. I would not endorse Thieme's "the wise king (Soma)" (*o.c.*, p. 57).

123. RENOU, *Études*, p. 51.

124. Cf. Sāyaṇa: *mahimā ... asmatstotrajanitaḥ kaścīd atīśayaḥ*.

latter. In the second place it does not seem to be beyond possibility to draw some information from the ideas of "friendship" fostered by the so-called tribes and backward communities still living in modern India because they may have retained customs and institutions of long standing. Finally, etymological considerations, provided they are in harmony with the results of philological investigations, may give a suitable finish to our investigations.

It may therefore, to begin with, be recalled that the idea of *maitra* continues to play an important part in Indian religious thought. If I am not mistaken, this later religious use represents an uninterrupted continuation of a Vedic application of the term *mitra* and its derivatives. In a passage dealing with the desirability of *abimsā* and atonement the man who has undertaken the consecration ceremony (*dīkṣita*) is said to be everybody's "friend" (MS. 3, 9, 3: 116, 5). It is interesting to remember that the *dīkṣita* by his very state of sanctification is delivered from any manifestation of "sin" and evil, has entered into contact with the divine and sacral powers, and has called on the divine presence and co-operation — "he is really intended to be born in the heavenly world" (ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 12). The idea underlying the statement that he is everybody's friend obviously is that he radiates a form of influence for good. At the end of a chapter on penances for secret sins it reads: "A brahman may attain (final) beatitude by solely repeating (prayers), whether he perform any other religious observance or no; one who is benevolent towards all creatures (*maitra*) is (justly) called a brahman" (ViS. 55, 21; VasDhŚ. 26, 11; Manu 2, 87). This benevolence is traditionally explained as characteristic of the man who refrains from offering animal sacrifices or, in a larger sense, transgresses the *abimsā* ideal¹²⁵. A place such as PGS. 2, 7, 18, prescribing that the absolved student of the Veda — a great being, who should always be pure, self-restrained and generous and not disposed to injure others (GautDhŚ. 9, 73) — who should be a model of good behaviour, must also protect everybody's life and be everybody's "friend", as it were, sheds also some light on what was especially expected from a "friend": he must practise the virtue of helpful benevolence.

It would appear to me that these places foreshadow the well-known Buddhist idea of *maitrā*, *maitrī*, *maitrya* (Pāli *mettā*) which is translated

125. G. BÜHLER, *The laws of Manu*, Oxford, 1886, p. 46. Rāghavānanda's explanation: *maitra* "he who worships, Mitra, the Sun" is doubtless beside the mark.

by terms such as "active interest in others, love and amity, active goodwill, altruism, universal friendship¹²⁶, sympathy and friendliness, benevolence, loving kindness, all-embracing compassion". It may be true that the "meaning (of this idea) has been enlarged mainly by Buddhism"¹²⁷, we had however better say that the spirit of amity, meekness and unwillingness to hurt was specially emphasized and given a more central and important place by that religious current. As such it is the first of the four so-called sublime or divine states of mind (*brahmavihāra*)¹²⁸, the others being compassion, sympathetic joy and serenity or equanimity¹²⁹. Some places may be quoted by way of illustration¹³⁰: Theragāthā 648 "(I am) a 'friend' (*mitta*) of all, (I am) a comrade (*sakhi*) of all, sympathetic to all beings, and I develop a mind full of love (*mettam*), always delighting in avoidance of injury". Aśv. Bc. 4, 64 "The threefold characteristics of friendship (*mitra*) is to restrain a man from what is unprofitable, to encourage him to what is profitable and to stand by him in adversity". Aṅguttara-Nikāya 4, 13, 125, 1: II, 128 f. "The heart of a person who irradiates the four quarters of the universe ... (cf. e.g. Dīgha-Nikāya 25, 17: III, 49 f.), is, when it is possessed of *metta*, widespread, grown great and boundless, free from enmity and untroubled". Ibidem 3, 14, 133: I, 286: "One makes friends with a person who gives what is hard to give, does what is hard to do, and is forbearing when it is hard to do so". Ibidem 5, 20, 198: III, 243: A word spoken in the state of mind called *mettā* is inter alia characterized by the fact that it is spoken in truth (*saccā*). Ibidem 6, 2, 11: III, 288: it is stated that *mettā* may appear from a person's deeds, words and thoughts. *Mettā* is quite intelligibly a remedy for the spiritual evil known as malice, ill-will or hatred (*āghāta*): ibi-

126. S. BH. DASGUPTA, *An introduction to Tāntric Buddhism*, Calcutta, 1950, p. 83. In French, e.g. "charité", or "bonté affectueuse".

127. See e.g. R. S. COPLESTON, *Buddhism*, London, 1892, p. 159 ff. *Maitrī* and *sarvajñatā* ("omniscience") are two traits of Buddha's character.

128. Cf. Lalitav. 4: 32, 1 *maitrī dharmālokaṃ mukham* ("the entrance to the light of the doctrine") *sarvopadhibhikṣapūṇyakriyāvastvabhāvanatāye samvartate*; 27: 442, 3 "resort to *maitrī* in order to destroy all malice".

129. Compare also combinations such as Lalitav. 2: 8, 3 *mahāmaitrīkaruṇāmuditopekṣābrahmapathakovidā*; 3: 28, 14 *anīrṣukā cāpy aśaṭhā amāyā tyāgānuraktā sabhamaitracittā*; 5: 54, 10 *sarvamaitramanasah sagauravāḥ bhāvino naravarasya tejasā*; 15: 224, 1 *maitracitto karuṇāya pāraprāpto* and ibid. 5: 53, 8 *maitracitta bhūta devamānuṣāḥ*; Divyāvadāna (ed. E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neil), p. 105, 17; 123, 7 *maitrāyatā and karuṇāyatā* or *karuṇayā*.

130. See also H. SADDHATISSA, *Buddhist Ethics*, London, 1970, p. 137 ff.

dem 5, 17, 161: III, 185 "In whatsoever person malice is engendered, in him *mettā* ought to be made to become more; in this way malice in him ought to be put away". Visuddhimagga 3, 58: "When a *bhikkhu* takes up a subject of meditation, he should first develop 'loving kindness' (*mettā*) towards the community of the *bhikkhus* ...: 'May they be happy and free from affliction'. Then he should develop it towards all deities, the principal people in the village, and to all living beings... Therewith he produces kindliness in his co-residents, the protection by kindly deities, by well-disposed principal people and he can go about without incurring the dislike of other beings ..."; 9, 98 "It is not possible to practise 'loving kindness' and feel anger simultaneously". It is further explicitly said that this state of mind should not be developed at first towards an antipathetic person, a very dearly loved friend (*atippiyasahāyake*), a neutral person, a hostile person, the opposite sex, or towards a dead person (9, 4). Visuddhimagga 9, 40: 308 "When his resentment towards the hostile person has been allayed, then he can turn his mind with *mettā* towards that person too, just as towards the one who is dear ... Then he should break down the barriers by practising *mettā* over and over again ...". According to a stanza contained in Jātaka 451 (IV, 71, 25) the *mettā* shown to all beings is characteristic of the one who does not kill and overpower or causes others to perform acts of violence; against such a man no hate will be found¹³¹. From passages such as Cullavagga 5, 6 it appears that *maitrī* is also a protective power which counteracts and annihilates inimical influences. Buddha resists and conquers Māra by his *maitrī* (Lalitavistara 21: 343, 6). See also Mahāvamsa 6, 28 ff.

In connection with the so-called *mettābhāvanā* "the cultivation of *mettā*"¹³² the Ceylonese commentary on the Visuddhimagga provides us with the following explanation: the person meditating starts from the feelings of love of himself and tries to transfer his individual longing for happiness to other sentient beings: "May all higher beings be happy, free from care, disease and sorrow"¹³³. The actual practice of *mettābhāvanā* has two aspects, one being the international intensification, the other the external radiation, of *mettā*, the very process of expanding

131. Compare also the remarks made by J. FILLIOZAT, *Maitreya l'Invaincu*, in *Journal asiatique*, 1950, p. 145 ff.

132. Cf., in Hinduism, Kām. Nīt. 3, 22 *bhāvayan paramāṃ maitrīm*.

133. See also F. HEILER, *Die buddhistische Versenkung*, München, 1922, p. 25.

the actual feeling of "love"¹³⁴. In the Metta Sutta (Sutta-Nipāta 143-152) it is taught that one should be free from deceit, diligent and upright, gentle and not vain-glorious; no one should, out of anger, or through resentment, wish misery to another; on the contrary, one should cherish boundless goodwill towards all beings, like a mother fostering her only son. Thus the feeling of "love" becomes, as soon as it is radiated towards all, one of the conditions making for bliss eternal. The Buddhist monk is therefore admonished constantly to dwell in these four divine states of mind, the first of which is *mettā*. As pointed out by Conze¹³⁵ the English "love" is an extremely unsatisfactory equivalent for *maitrī* or *mettā* which is not so much ordinary human affection, even in a sublimated form, as an intense detached and impersonal benevolence which is radiated to all living beings. *Mettā* leads to the state of union with Brahmā, the god who inhabits a lofty, though still mundane, plane of being. If one is a disciple of the Buddha this virtue will result in final deliverance (Aṅguttara-Nikāya II, 128).

The term was defined and explained by prominent Buddhists themselves as denoting "the desire of bringing welfare and good to one's fellow-men" (Buddhaghōṣa, at Sutta-Nipāta A. 128: *hitasukkūpanaya-kāmatā*); and by means of pseudo-etymologies: it is a feeling of affection, comes about with respect to a "friend" or it is behaviour towards a "friend" (Visuddhimagga 9, 92: 317 f.). "*Mettā* consists in bestowing benefits on others, is based on the ability to see their pleasant side, and results in the stilling of ill-will and malice" (ibidem, 9, 93: 318). *Maitrī* tends to tranquillizing the nature full of hate (Aśv. Saund. 16, 62). Other words used in explaining the concept are "compassion or care" (*anuddā*), "well-wishing or being desirous of another's welfare" (*bite-sita*), "kindness of heart" (*anukampā*), "freedom from malice" (*avyā-pāda*). *Mettā* is also identified with "emancipation of the heart" (*ceto-vimutti*: Saṃyutta-Nikāya II, 265); "emancipation of the heart, developed, practised, made a habit of, made a foundation, effected, accumulated, thoroughly undertaken" (e.g. Dīgha-Nikāya 33, 2, 2: III, 247 f.)¹³⁶. As one of the "transcendent virtues" (*pāramitās*) of Buddhism

134. BHIKSHU SANGHARAKSHITA, *A survey of Buddhism*, Bangalore, 1959, p. 160 f.; 436; 468.

135. E. CONZE, in *The Middle Way*, 1954, p. 134.

136. In Jaina literature also *mettī* (*maitrī*) first and foremost is "friendship" as "the idea of helping others".

maitrī is defined as follows: "La compassion, étendue à tout ce qui vit, la vertu qui vous fait donner tout ce qui est vôtre et assumer les malheurs d'autrui, la compassion intense qui vous fait porter à tous l'amour d'une mère pour son enfant unique"¹³⁷.

It is finally worth remembering that the name of the next Buddha, Maitreya¹³⁸, who was already known in the earliest period of Buddhism, derives from the terms under discussion. "Wie sein Name besagt, besitzt er die Liebe (*maitrī*), die ausgesprochene Tugend der Bodhisattva"¹³⁹. Deriving from *maitrī* his name indeed means: son, i.e. representative, of *maitrī*, "amour et bonté, compassion et tendresse pour l'humanité"¹⁴⁰. According to the tradition preserved in the Maitreyavyākaraṇa his mother, being on the point of giving birth to him, was radiant with active benevolence (*maitreṇāṃśena sphuritvā*)¹⁴¹. The venerable compassionate Maitreya himself is traditionally — e.g. in the Gaṇḍavyūha — described as intent on benefiting the world¹⁴². Whether his name¹⁴³ and his early occurrence in the history of Buddhism justify the supposition¹⁴⁴ that he is historically identical with the Vedic Mitra, received with a slightly different name into the august assembly of the Buddhist "saints", is doubtful and, as far as I am able to see, incapable of proof. So much however seems certain that his name and the most prominent trait of his character prove him to represent the same idea and the same ideal as that Vedic figure. I do not consider it part of my task to sketch the development of the Maitreya cult which came to be a form of devotional Buddhism, and in which the divine grace, friendly, benevolent and efficacious, was the only means of obtaining salvation, or the worship of Mahāyāna Buddhism, where this bodhisattva became a god of

137. L. LATOURRETTE, *Maitreya, le Bouddha futur*, Paris, 1926, p. 116.

138. See especially E. LAMOTTE, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien*, Louvain, 1958, p. 775 ff. and LATOURRETTE, *o.c.*; see e.g. p. 49; 73; 79 f.; 82; 116; 148 and J. FILLIOZAT, *Maitreya l'Invaincu*, J.A., 1950, p. 145 ff.

139. A. BAREAU, *Buddhismus*, in *Die Religionen Indiens III* (Die Religionen der Menschheit, herausg. von C. M. Schröder, XIII), Stuttgart, 1964, p. 148.

140. LATOURRETTE, *o.c.*, p. 49.

141. Cf. LAMOTTE, *o.c.*, p. 777.

142. Cf. e.g. D. T. SUZUKI, *On Indian Mahayana Buddhism*, New York-London, 1968, p. 177.

143. The name is also known to the Sivaite Pāsupatas: Kuśika, Gārgya, Kauruṣa and Maitreya are four pupils of Śiva's incarnation Lakulīṣa.

144. Pro: LAMOTTE, *o.c.*, p. 783. The hypothesis of an Iranian origin is rightly rejected by BAREAU, *o.c.*, p. 148. Cf. also E. ABEGG, *Der Messiasglaube in Indien und Iran*, Berlin, 1928, esp. p. 241.

light and inspiration, a comforter and a guide of the souls of the deceased¹⁴⁵.

The idea expressed by the term *maitra* is not foreign to Hindu religions either. I am not the first to recall that the four Buddhist *brahma-vihāras* recur in Patañjali's Yogasūtra, 1, 33: "By the cultivation of friendliness towards (those that have reached the experience of) happiness, compassion towards (those in) pain, sympathetic joy towards (those who have earned) merit and equanimity towards (those who have incurred) demerit (the yogin should attain) the undisturbed mental calm"¹⁴⁶. The same authority teaches that (as a result of constraint) upon "friendliness" and the other "sentiments" there arise special superior powers, viz. the power of "friendliness" etc. (3, 23), which are the counterpart of the miraculous powers which, according to the Buddhists, result from the cultivation of *mettā*¹⁴⁷; see e.g. Cullavagga 7, 3, 12. The forest hermit should *inter alia* restrain his senses, be friendly (towards all) and be compassionate towards all living creatures (ManuS. 6, 8)¹⁴⁸. In the Mahābhārata, 1, 82, 12 sympathy (*dayā*) and "friendship" (*maitrī*) are among the virtues which always and everywhere propitiate the hearts of one's fellow-men. Another combination is *karuṇa* "compassion" and *maitrī* (e.g. Bhartṛhari, Vair. 62; cf. Aśv. Saund. 15, 13 [and 17] *maitrī kārūṇyam eva ca*). The belief that *maitrī* or a *maitrī buddhiḥ* "a 'friendly' mind" is conducive to one's own spiritual welfare and salvation is not foreign to the Great Epic either: 3, 91, 21 "Purifying yourselves, harbouring only friendly feelings for all, go to the holy places ... and obtain the fruits of pilgrimages"; 13, 132, 35 "those men will go to heaven who are free from enmity and idleness, always all benevolence, and full of compassion for all beings"¹⁴⁹. Among the "fruits" of "friendship" (*mitratā*) is according to the Pāñ-

145. P. DEMIÉVILLE, in Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient, 44 (1954), p. 376 ff. and LATOURRETTE, *o.c.*, p. 150 ff. Compare also in the Maitreyasamiti (edited by E. LEUMANN, *Maitreya-samiti*, das Zukunftsideal der Buddhisten. Die nordarische Schilderung in Text und Uebersetzung, Strassburg, 1919), st. 164 ff. (p. 91 ff.): "... (und er erkennt, dass) sehr der Bemitleidung bedürftig (diejenigen sind), denen das Verlangen im Weltgetriebe der Liebe zu (gewandt ist) ... aus grosser Teilnahme, kraft deren er (nieder)regnet das Gesetz, das dem Nektar gleichende erhabene ...".

146. J. H. WOODS, *The Yoga-system of Patañjali*, Cambridge Mass., 1914, p. 71.

147. See H. OLDENBERG, *Buddha*, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1921, p. 343 ff.; H. BECKH, *Buddhism*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1916, I, p. 134; II, p. 29.

148. See e.g. also Mbh. 14, 45, 20.

149. See also Mbh. 13, 132, 22.

catantra or other works deliverance from calamity¹⁵⁰, assistance in case of need¹⁵¹, protection¹⁵².

A *maitra*, i.e. a man who befriends (all creatures), is declared to be a true brahman: *maitro brāhmaṇa ucyate*: Manu-Smṛti 2, 87; Viṣṇu-Smṛti 55, 21; VāsDhŚ. 26, 11; Mbh. 1, 209, 5; 13, 28, 11, words which can also, with some commentators, be read as: "It is declared that a brahman (shall be) a friend (of all creatures)". According to the commentator Kullūka *maitra* is synonymous with *mitra*. In modern usage the term *maitra* is given to a brahman who has arrived at the highest stage of human perfection¹⁵³. The same words were at ManuS. 11, 35 even translated by: the brahman is a benefactor (of all created beings)¹⁵⁴. The man who is free from hatred, friendly and compassionate is dear to God (BhG. 12, 13 f.). In Viṣṇuite milieus the true *bhakta* is free from passion, *maitra*, compassionate and self-possessed (BhāgP. 3, 27, 8). "Wer die Einheits- und Gleichschau erworben hat, mag Ihm (Gott) durch Freigebigkeit, Verehrung und Freundschaft gegen die Lebewesen (*maitrī*) huldigen" (BhāgPur. 3, 29, 27)¹⁵⁵. In later Bengal Vaiṣṇavism *maitra* implies that "friendship" which is characterized by kindness and humility¹⁵⁶. Kṛṣṇa, God incarnate, is indeed the eternal *mitra*¹⁵⁷.

"Friendship" (*maitrī*) is with honesty, liberality, veracity, gratitude mentioned among those virtues which lead to success and prosperity (Kām. Nīt. 1, 22); or it combines with loving and faithful devotion (*bhakti*) and integrity (ibid. 4, 38). "That man is a perfect friend whose heart melts always at the grief of others, who tries to do good to others, who serves others without asking and is the protector, at the proper time, of wife, wealth and secrets (Śukranīti 4, 1, 5)¹⁵⁸. At Mbh. 3, 3,

150. Ind. Spr. 2783; cf. 1495.

151. Ind. Spr. 21553.

152. Ind. Spr. 24865; 4867.

153. J. T. PLATTS, *A dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī, and English*, Oxford, 1930, p. 1103.

154. Cf. also Mbh. 5, 62 App. 28 *sarvabhūtabhito maitraḥ*; and Kām. Nitis. 4, 29; 15, 28; MārKP. 20, 20.

155. A. GAIL, *Bhakti im Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, Wiesbaden, 1969, p. 83.

156. S. CH. CHAKRAVARTI, *Philosophical foundations of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism*, Calcutta, 1969, p. 255, cf. 260.

157. W. EIDLITZ, *Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya*, Stockholm, 1968, p. 367.

158. Here and sometimes elsewhere (e.g. Mbh. 12, 108, 7) *subhṛd* is used instead of *mitra*.

69 (199) B. Maitrī occurs, together with Kṣubhā "the Shaker", as a personification; according to the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha these goddesses bring about (or represent) coercion or punishment and favour or furtherance (*nigrahānugrahakartryau*). The BhāgP. 4, 1, 49 mentions Maitrī together with Śraddhā "Faith", Dayā "Sympathy or Compassion", Śānti "Peace, Absence of passion" etc. among the wives of Dharma.

From part of the — epic, purāṇic, or other — aphorisms dealing with or making mention of a "friend" or "friendship"¹⁵⁹ no conclusions can be drawn, these terms being used like our equivalents, and "friends" being put on a par with relatives¹⁶⁰ or contrasted with enemies. Other sayings or current stanzas emphasize the positive aspects of friendship, such as loyalty¹⁶¹, assistance, protection. "Affection, love, attachment" (*sneha*) is one of its characteristics (Bhartṛhari, Nītiś. 25; Pañc. 1, 344 +). A true *mitra*¹⁶² is "ein Freude bereitender Zaubertrank für die Augen so wie eine Wonne für 's Herz", but a *mitra* enjoys also indemnity from harm (Kathāss. 5, 82).

Before leaving this subject we should do well to cast a glance at so important an authority on Indian politics as Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra. Among those points which strike us is first and foremost this that in enumerating the various forms of relationship between political leaders, this book puts *mitram*, that is "friendship" — including also the relation of a common friend with two other royal persons — (2, 10, 50)¹⁶³ on a par with kinship, marriage relationship, relationship through sacrificial performances etc. Among those who can become a *mitra* ("friend" or "ally") are (7, 18, 29) one marching for a common or separate objective (cf. e.g. also Manu-Smṛti, 7, 165), one marching after joining forces, one marching after making a pact (*samhitaprayāṇikah*). The characteristics of a true ally are (6, 1, 12; 7, 9, 38 ff.) the following: he should be allied from the days of father and grandfather (i.e. heredi-

159. See e.g. O. BÖHTLINGK, *Indische Sprüche*, 2III, St. Petersburg, 1873, p. 44 ff.

160. However, the special character of bonds of friendship is illustrated by dharma precepts and customs according to which a "friend" is, from the point of view of ritual purity or good conduct, put on a par with the next of kin and the guru. (See e.g. ManuSm. 5, 82; 11, 170 [*sakhi*]; GautSm. 23, 12; cf. also SauraPur. 52, 21).

161. See e.g. Mbh. 5, 39, 34 ff.; 12, a. 81; Bhartṛhari, Nītiś. 68 *tan mitram āpadi yukhe ca samakriyam yat*.

162. Ind. Spr. 24860 contrasted with a *subhṛd*.

163. Quotations are after R. P. KANGLE, *The Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*, I (edition), Bombay, 1960; II (translation), Bombay, 1963.

tary), constant, under one's control, without a separate interest, great and able to mobilize quickly. We should however bear in mind that in Indian politics the *mitra* naturally is the ally of a king who intends to conquer his neighbours, and that he is the enemy of his enemy (*ari*) whose territory is contiguous to that of both the would-be conquerer and the *mitra*¹⁶⁴. It stands to reason that "a special advantage results from an ally whose undertaking is possible, sound or productive or who is resolute in his undertakings or who has loyal subjects" (7, 8, 11). "As long as one helps, one becomes an 'ally' ", "for", it is stated with all clearness desirable, "the characteristic of a *mitra* is conferring benefit (advantage, assistance)" (7, 9, 12). In this the author is in perfect harmony with various other ancient Indian authorities¹⁶⁵. The development of this line of thought in later chapters (7, 16, 10¹⁶⁶; 7, 18, 31 ff.) removes any doubt about what is central in the idea of "friendship": here again it is a special form of active benevolence and helpfulness. The author goes so far as to advise a king to exterminate a *mitra* who, though capable, would not help him in times of trouble (7, 18, 40). It should on the other hand not escape our observation that this alliance does not depend on a covenant, that these *mitras* are not described as being under the obligation to lend assistance because they have concluded a contract.

Contracts, or rather treaties (*samdhi*) are nevertheless a frequent occurrence¹⁶⁷. They are however concluded not with a *mitra*, or with a person who is wanted to be a *mitra*, but first and foremost with the *ari*, that is the neighbour who is an actual or potential enemy. We had therefore better speak of "treaties of peace, reconciliation, absence of war". For instance, in order to overreach (*atisamdhi*-) the *ari* a would-be conquerer should induce him to march after entering into a treaty

164. See KANGLE, *o.c.*, III, Bombay, 1965, p. 248. Cf. e.g. also Yājñavalkya, 1, 344. In RV. 1, 178, 4 the *mitrinah* seem to be those who support the enemies of those speaking who are assisted by Indra (otherwise, Renou, E.V.P. XVI, p. 65).

165. See e.g. Mbh. 12, 136, 104; 132 ff.; Rām. 4, 11, 78 vulg.; Aśv. Bc. 2, 4; 2, 6; Bhāravi, Kir. 13, 52 *mitralābham anu lābbhasampadab*. I also refer to J. J. MEYER, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben*, Leipzig, 1926, p. LXII.

166. "He who helps in many ways with gems, articles of high value, carriages, vehicles, herds etc. is the ally of varied usefulness".

167. See e.g. also Mbh. 5, 10, 13; 12, 59, 37. For the use of *samdhi*- "to reconcile, agree, arrange etc." in the Vedic story of Indra and Namuci (MS. 4, 3, 4: 42, 16; 43, 9) see A. Hillebrandt, in *Zs. f. Ind. u. Iran.* 3, p. 5. There the purpose of the *samdhi* is explicitly said to be *anabhidrobhaya*, i.e. "in order to secure (somebody) from malice".

(*samdhā*). "You march in this direction, I shall march in that; the gains shall be equal. If the gains are equal, there should be 'peace' (*samdhi*), if unequal, fight" (7, 6, 1-3). Thus chapter 7, 7 dealing with "peace and war" (*samdhivikramās*) opens with a piece of advice as to how to secure support from the *ari* by making a pact of alliance with him. It is true that when marching after making such a pact one may gain an ally (*mitra*), money and land — the gain of each later one being preferable to that of the earlier one — (7, 9, 1), but this ally (*mitra*) is not the one with whom one has concluded a pact. In case of a so-called equal pact (*samasamdhi*) both contracting parties aim at securing an ally. Thus *samdhi* is "making a treaty containing conditions or terms, that is the policy of peace"¹⁶⁸, the settlement of differences, an agreement with an *ari* from interested motives or for reasons of common interest¹⁶⁹. Hence also the statement that the *mitra* who for the sake of his own ends comes to an understanding with the *ari* is unreliable (7, 18, 35).

That "friendship" or alliance does not, or not necessarily, presuppose a pact or covenant is also apparent from other sources. Thus Māgha, Śiśupālavadhā 2, 36 in harmony with Somadevasūri's Nītivā-kyāmṛta, 115, 8 ff. distinguishes three categories of "friend"; here called *sakhi*, viz. the *sahaja*, i.e. the "friend" by birth; the *prākṛta*, i.e. the natural "friend"; the *kṛtrima*, i.e. the "friend" made (for the time being)¹⁷⁰. The last type of friendship, which is not formed naturally or spontaneously, depends, the commentator Mallinātha observes, on deliberate effort, aiming at advantage or (the infliction of) disadvantages (to others)¹⁷¹. One should not therefore enter into a pact with a "friend" who acts improperly, i.e. injures one's interests (Māgha, o.c., 2, 37)¹⁷². One should also realize that "friends" in a low position can render no

168. KANGLE, o.c., III, p. 251.

169. For the use of the term *samdhi* compare e.g. also Manu-Smṛti 7, 169; 206; Kām Nīt. 9, 1; Böhtlingk, Indische Sprüche, 26371; 6814. The term *samīānasamdhi* is used for "peace or association cemented by family alliance": it is concluded by marrying off a daughter, or is preceded or accompanied by such an act; "the experts consider it to be founded on (preceded by) *maitrī*" (Kām. Nīt. 9, 6).

170. Cf. e.g. also Mbh. 12, 81, 3 *caturvidhāni mitrāṇi rājñām rājan bhavanty uta / sabārtho* (one who has the same object in view) *bhājamānaś* (i.e. *pitṛpaitāmahakra-māgataḥ*, Nīlakaṇṭha) *ca sahajaḥ kṛtrimas tatbā*.

171. Cf. also Mbh. 12, 136, 104; 12, 138, 51.

172. For enemies see e.g. Śukraniti 4, 1, 9 ff. ("destroyers of each other's interest"); 4, 7, 504.

service (Kālidāsa, Ragh. 17, 58). The expression *samdhivigraha* occurring, for instance, in Manu-Smṛti 7, 56 is therefore correctly translated by "peace and war" (Bühler); cf. also 7, 65¹⁷³.

There is however no denying, first that "official" or rather ceremonial "friendships" are a common feature of the social life of numerous castes and tribes of many regions of the Indian subcontinent¹⁷⁴, and in the second place that the term *maitra* is in this connection not unusual everywhere¹⁷⁵. This institutionalized friendship, being regarded as equally sacred as blood-relationship, provides advantages of a social, economic and psychological kind and attaches moral sanctions to the performance of material, non-ritual services. It is a ceremonial alliance characterized by mutual active benevolence¹⁷⁶. For the Bondo¹⁷⁷, for instance, it is "a very genuine alliance of affection and mutual support", even though he may occasionally contract such a friendship with an official or outsider for business purposes. Throughout life the so-called *moitur* friend must remain the firm ally and supporter of his "friend" — "an important point in a tribe of so many vendettas" — and when they meet, two "friends" have to exchange ceremonial presents. However, there exists a ceremony of covenant, the main features of which may be the sprinkling of prepared water, exchanging new clothes, inviting each to the other's house; neighbours or other witnesses are requested to be present at the ceremony, which often takes place on the occasion of a festival. Not rarely "different forms of such artificial friendship" are distinguished, e.g. *maitra*, *māhaprasād*¹⁷⁸ etc. This relationship is ge-

173. See e.g. also Böhtlingk, *Indische Sprüche*, 7496 *kāle ca ripuṇā samdhiḥ kāle ca mitravigrahaḥ* "Zu rechter Zeit muss man mit seinen Feinden Frieden schliessen und mit seinen Freunden kämpfen".

174. See e.g. J. H. HUTTON, *The Sema Nagas*, London, 1921, p. 228 f.; R. FIRTH, *Bond-Friendship in Tikopia, Custom is King*, London, 1936, p. 259 ff.; V. ELWIN, *The Muria and their ghotul*, Oxford, 1947, p. 456 ff.; the same, *Bondo Highlander*, Oxford, 1950, p. 37 ff.; S. CH. ROY, *The Hill Bhūiyās of Orissa*, Ranchi, 1935, p. 235 ff.; the same and R. CH. ROY, *The Kharis*, Ranchi, 1937, p. 162; S. CH. ROY, *The Birhors*, Ranchi, 1925, p. 527 ff.; the same, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, Ranchi, 1915, p. 396 ff.

175. Roy, *The Hill Bhūiyās*, l.c.

176. "Lakher men generally have some special formal friend ... who is expected to help when one is in trouble and is used as a confidant" (HUTTON, *The Lakhers*, London, 1932, p. 274).

177. Elwin, *The Bondo Highlander*, l.c.

178. "Technically the two contracting parties to a friendship should partake together of some of the sacred food which has been offered to a god and brought to them by returning pilgrims (*prasād*)" (Elwin, l.c.).

nerally speaking taken very seriously, and in definite communities it is usual for the sons of "friends" to become "friends" in turn¹⁷⁹.

Finally, I have to say a few words on the etymology¹⁸⁰. It will be no great surprise to hear that I have grave doubts about the correctness of Meillet's proposal to connect the name of the god and the appellative noun with the root **mei-* "to exchange"¹⁸¹. Basing ourselves on the Indian occurrences of both the proper name and the appellative noun it is hardly possible to adduce any weighty argument in favour of the hypothesis that the semantic kernel of these words was the idea of some sort of contractual exchange. Those words of other Indo-European languages which are with greater or less probability regarded as deriving from this root — e.g. Latin *mūnus* "service, office, function, duty"; *commūnis* "common to several or to all"¹⁸² — are semantically too distant to make their relationship with *mitra* probable. The objections made by Mayrhofer¹⁸³ to a connection with a root **mei-* "to bind, fasten to"¹⁸⁴ can, notwithstanding the "schöne Bedeutungsparallelen", only be subscribed to: this root is a questionable hypothesis, the origin of the Greek *μῆτρα* "maiden's girdle, headband" and *μήτρος* "thread (of the warp)", which are its main support, being disputed and uncertain¹⁸⁵ and a semantic starting-point "bond"¹⁸⁶ for the Indian word hardly acceptable. The possibility of an etymological relation with *minoti* "to fix, fasten, set up, found, construct" considered on the strength of a supposedly close connection¹⁸⁷ between Lat. *pax* "a treaty of peace,

179. J. P. MILLS, *The Lhota Nagas*, London, 1922, p. 104.

180. See also J. WACKERNAGEL-A. DEBRUNNER, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2, Göttingen, 1954, p. 701.

181. See e.g. J. POKORNY, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I, Bern-München, 1959, p. 710.

182. Cf. A. WALDE-J. B. HOFMANN, *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I, Heidelberg, 1938, p. 254 f.; A. ERNOUT-A. MEILLET, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, Paris, 1951, p. 748 ff.

183. M. MAYRHOFFER, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, I, Heidelberg, 1963, p. 634.

184. H. PETERSSON, in *Studier-E. Tegnér*, Uppsala, 1913, p. 226 ff.

185. See HJ. FRISK, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, II, Heidelberg, 1963, p. 245 f.

186. Assumed also by H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1923, p. 188 f., n. 3.

187. But see WALDE-HOFMANN, *o.c.*, II, p. 231 f.; 245 f.; ERNOUT-MEILLET, *o.c.*, p. 838 f.

reconciliation" and *pangēre* "to fasten, fix"¹⁸⁸ is for similar reasons as speculative as the suggestion¹⁸⁹ that *mitra* has anything to do with the root **mē-* (Old Indian *mā-*) "to measure, mete out, mark off, construct (by measuring)"¹⁹⁰, because this root is held to be "vaguement analogue à *yat-*" in *Mitra's* epithet *yātayajjana*¹⁹¹.

Least improbable seems an etymological relation with Vedic *mayas* "restoration, redress, refreshment". At RV. 1, 175, 6 Indra is said to have been a *mayas* ("ein Labsal", Geldner, "un réconfort", Renou¹⁹²) for his praisers of old; at 1, 31, 7 Agni to procure *mayas* to both races (of god and men) and satisfaction¹⁹³ to the eulogist's patron; at 1, 93, 1 the same god and Soma are invited (to the sacrifice) and requested to be a *mayas* "(eine Freude) for the worshipper"¹⁹⁴. In connection with 1, 89, 3, where the goddess Sarasvatī, the *subhagā* ("blessed, pleasing, beloved one", or even "la bénéfique"¹⁹⁵) is expected to bestow *mayas*, Renou¹⁹⁶ rightly observed that it is "l'idée de chose bénéfice plus encore que 'agréable'" which is in question here. The poet of 7, 32, 8 states that only the liberal or bounteous one is a *mayas* for the liberal one, that means that the god (Indra) will amply bestow refreshing advantages upon the man who offers him bountifully; here such ideas as "un heureux et aimable réconfort"¹⁹⁷ were no doubt running through the author's mind. For reciprocal *mayas* see MS. 1, 9, 4: 133, 15 "May there be *mayas* for the giver, *mayas* for me, the receiver". The poet of RV. 8, 18, 7 speaks of *śāmtāti māyas* "beneficent *mayas*" to be granted by Aditi. The Maruts, given the epithet "being *mayas*" (*mayobbhavaḥ*), are in RV. 8, 20, 24 implored "to be *mayas*" with propitious or benevolent help or protection (*ūtībhīr .. śivābhīḥ*). Similarly, Sūrya, the Sun,

188. THIEME, in *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeiger*, 209, p. 211.

189. Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 98.

190. POKORNY, *o.c.*, I, p. 703.

191. Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 98.

192. Renou, E.V.P. XVII, p. 52.

193. For *prayas* see Renou, E.V.P. VII, p. 9: "la satisfaction consistant en les bénéfices de l'acte pie".

194. Similarly RV. 1, 186, 5 (Ahi Budhnya); 3, 1, 3 (Agni); 5, 46, 4 (Viṣṇu and Vāta); 7, 81, 3 (Uṣas); 8, 60, 6 (Agni).

195. Renou, E.V.P. V, p. 3.

196. Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 19. I have my serious doubts about his suggestion (l.c. and E.V.P. III, p. 104) to connect the word with the root *mi-* ("to erect") and to regard "structure, force" as a more original meaning.

197. Renou, E.V.P. III, p. 103 f.

is at 10, 37, 8 said to be a *mayas*¹⁹⁸ for every eye. Like *mitra* the *mayas* concept is not exclusively ascribed to gods: in RV. 10, 40, 10 women are said to be a *mayas* to be embraced¹⁹⁹ for their husbands. These places, as well as VS. 34, 9 requesting Agni and Anumati (Divine Favour) to be *mayas* for the worshipper, exhibit a use which is very similar to that of *mitra*. Renou already drew attention to the fact that *mayas*, like *mitra*, combines with the verbs *karoti* "to make" (e.g. 8, 18, 7) and *dadhāti* "to place, make, produce": 8, 39, 4 Agni is described as granting happiness, welfare and *mayas* in return for every invocation of gods²⁰⁰. At 1, 114, 2 and 10, 64, 1 *mayas* combines with forms of the verb for "having mercy, being gracious" (*mṛl-*)²⁰¹. Whereas Mitra is in TS. 5, 1, 6, 1 called the "benign or auspicious one" (*śivah*) of the gods (cf. TB. 2, 8, 7, 5 *ayam mitro namasyah suśevah*), the concept under discussion is at TB. 2, 2, 5, 5 identified with the idea expressed by the adjective *śivam* (*yad vai śivam tan mayah*)²⁰².

198. Renou, E.V.P. XV, p. 8: "réconfort".

199. Compare the Avestan *mayah* "sexual delight, cohabitation".

200. Cf. RV. 3, 1, 3.

201. This verb is already at RV. 1, 136, 1 used in connection with Mitra and Varuṇa.

202. For non-Indo-Iranian words which may (or may not) be etymologically connected with *mayas* see A. WALDE-J. POKORNY, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*, II, Berlin-Leipzig, 1927, p. 244. Special attention may be drawn to Latin *mitis* "mild, mellow, kindly, gentle" O. Irish *mōith*, *moeth* (Lat.) "tender"; Lithuanian *mėlas* "dear".